

SPECIAL, NOT SPECIAL

ICEBREAKER

Growing up, what were you taught about the Jewish people?

Twice now, we have seen the promise in Deuteronomy that God blesses the people who honor him and he judges the people who don't, yet, we all know people who have honored God and yet experienced hardship. How do you personally reconcile those things? Do you think the promise of blessing still applies today?

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Read Deut. 7:1-15. What made the Israelites special?

God says he loves 1000 generations of those who love him. Do you think that applies only to Jewish people or was it meant to apply to all people?

Moses specifically reminds the Israelites that they are special because of God's love and not loved because they are special. Yet, throughout history, the "people of God" of any generation have had a tendency to view themselves more highly than they should. Why do you think that is? Have you seen any examples of a follower of God thinking they are better than others?

In Deuteronomy 7-11, Moses encourages the people to employ four specific practices to express their special relationship with God. For each of these behaviors, share with the group what you think of that command and how you think it applies to us today.

- Deuteronomy 7:16. Establish a special environment (by eliminating the distraction of the other nations).
- Deuteronomy 8:1-18. Give God credit for all prosperity.
- Deuteronomy 9:1-6. Give God credit for all success.
- Deuteronomy 10:12-21. Just honor God.

Read Deuteronomy 11:26-28. What do you think of that?

TAKE IT HOME

The reason we can say these promises apply to us is that they were never based on how special one group of people were. They have always been based on the fact that God has chosen some people and has promised to bless them when they love him back. What does it mean to you that God has also chosen you? (Before answering, read 1 Peter 2:9-10, Colossians 3:11-12.)

Finally, if the blessings are promised to those who obey, what does John 8:28-29 say to you?

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